
**House Natural Resources, Great Lakes and Land Use Committee
1/25/2006**

Mr. and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this package of bills. Given the long list of interested citizens here today, I will keep my remarks brief.

Over the last three years, there has been a great deal of progress on water withdrawal issues. I think everyone involved in the water discussions have learned a lot compared to what we knew in back in 2003.

Two important pieces of legislation were adopted in 2003. First PA 148 created the Groundwater Conservation Advisory Council. The council has helped establish a scientific knowledge base regarding groundwater. With all of the great work of USGS, DEQ, DNR, MSU and others, the council developed the mapping process and compiled enormous amounts of information regarding the amount of water available in Michigan. This information has been essential in formulating water withdrawal policy that recognizes the natural economic advantage that Michigan' enormous water resources provide.

The second important statute of 2003 was PA 177, which established the conflict resolution process. At the time, it was presumed by many that large quantity users were causing problems for small quantity users all over the state. Since passage of the act, we have learned that there are in fact, very few conflicts. Over the last two years there have been just 31 reported conflicts and they were limited to just two counties Saginaw and Monroe. There are more than a million groundwater wells in Michigan. With less than 30 verified complaints in two years, I think we can conclude that we have a lot of groundwater available for use in this state.

So what have we learned? I think we have learned that Michigan has enormous groundwater resources. Kurt Hiese, Co-chair of the Groundwater Conservation Advisory Council, reported at the Senate hearing in Northville in September, "There is no overall shortage of groundwater in the state. Currently, groundwater withdrawals do not present a crisis."

After several months of intense discussion in the Senate sponsored workgroup process, I believe this package of bills is the right solution. The package enjoys broad based support including DEQ, the environmental community, the agricultural community, local government, and the business community. MMA supports this package for a few fundamental reasons:

- The package is rooted in science-based information and science-based processes going forward.
- The package respects the investment of existing infrastructure by not imposing retroactive regulation on existing users.
- The package recognizes the enormous water resources available in Michigan and the natural economic advantage that water provides Michigan compared to other states and nations. Here is an interesting fact:
 - Michigan receives about 31 inches of rainfall on average each year. All groundwater uses in Michigan amounts to less than one third of one inch of rainfall.
- The package ensures that water used by citizens and job providers will not have an adverse resource impact.

In summary, we believe this package represents an agreement among the diverse group of stakeholders and deserves the support of this committee. We believe this package protects the natural resources, while protecting the state's ability to attract and retain much needed manufacturing investment in this state. Fundamentally, we believe the bills respect the natural economic advantage Michigan's abundant water resources provide our citizens.

Thank you